



King County

**Office of Strategic Planning &
Performance Management**

Chinook Building
401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 810
Seattle, WA 98104

April 29, 2010

The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Chair, King County Council
Room 1200
COURTHOUSE

Dear Councilmember Ferguson:

I am pleased to transmit legislation that would adopt the first ever countywide strategic plan, as required by the Performance and Accountability Act (Ordinance 16202). The Countywide Strategic Plan, entitled *King County Strategic Plan, 2010-2014: Working Together for One King County*, will serve as the foundation for creating a culture of performance, service excellence, partnership, and financial stewardship for King County government.

The transmittal of the plan culminates nearly 18 months of focused work reflecting broad input from King County's elected leadership, our employees, our partners, and our residents. The input was gathered through multiple approaches including:

- A countywide survey of residents asking about their satisfaction with King County services, their priorities for services in the future, and how they think decisions should be made;
- Four public workshops across the County at which residents shared their vision for the county and their priorities for service;
- Workshops with communities that are frequently under-represented;
- An online survey on the County's website;
- Several meetings with the County's elected officials during which they developed and endorsed the mission, vision and guiding principles contained within the plan and provided input into the planning process;
- A survey of King County employees asking them about job satisfaction and how King County services and operations could be improved;

- A meeting with leaders of many of the county's 39 cities to get feedback on how the county can better partner with and serve our residents; and
- In November of last year, Executive Triplett issued a public review draft and public comments were received via phone and the internet.

Completing the Countywide Strategic Plan was the priority for my first 100 days as County Executive. My executive leadership team worked with department directors and independently elected leaders to build on the work of 2009.

The result is the plan I am transmitting today: a clearer, more focused strategic plan with specific actions and strategies that create a blueprint for progress and reform of County government. Consistent with Ordinance 16202, this transmittal also includes a framework for performance measurement, prioritization of goals, and designation of departments and agencies as leads for implementation in support of the plan.

The proposed ordinance will establish the Countywide Strategic Plan as the policy framework for priority setting, business planning, budget development, resource allocation and leadership, and managerial accountability, and sets forth next steps for King County's elected leadership to ensure the long term success of the plan. I certify that the passage of the ordinance adopting the strategic plan is not anticipated to have a direct fiscal impact on county agencies.

I have identified the following priorities for implementation in the first year of the five-year lifespan of this plan:

- Set standards and expectations for the immediate improvement of customer service;
- Build lasting regional partnerships;
- Stabilize the long-term structural budget problem by clearly defining King County service levels and giving voters choices;
- Build a culture of performance; and
- Empower our workforce to work together as one King County.

I understand the Council's interest in considering the Countywide Strategic Plan separately from initial implementation steps. The proposed ordinance I am transmitting therefore focuses on adoption of the strategic plan. As an attachment to this letter, I am also transmitting our initial work on key components of implementation: an accountability structure and the performance measurement framework.

- I. *The accountability structure* sets out roles and responsibilities for coordinating implementation activities, ongoing monitoring, and future revision at all levels of the plan. It also assigns lead agencies at the objective level to convene and coordinate these efforts.
- II. *The expanded performance measurement framework* is based on existing county performance measures and sets a baseline for measuring our

progress. It goes beyond what is required by KCC 2.10.60 by beginning to lay out measures at the strategy level in addition to the community indicators included in the plan. This additional layer of measurement will improve our ability to link everyday decision-making and performance evaluation with the high-level goals laid out in the strategic plan.

I look forward to continued work with the Council on these and other elements of the implementation.

The Council's adoption of the Countywide Strategic Plan is a critical first step in creating a culture of performance at King County. The plan provides the vision of the future and the strategies we will employ to achieve that vision. At the core of cultivating a culture of performance is our shared commitment to being a learning organization that can reflect on our actions and progress, identify opportunities for improvement, and quickly adapt to forward our goals.

In the coming year, we, as King County's elected leaders, will need to maintain focus on implementing the plan and making adjustments as we learn along the way. To that end, I will ask my elected colleagues representing each branch of county government to meet with me as a group at the beginning and middle of every year beginning in 2011 to assess our efforts and to work through the organizational and resource challenges we will undoubtedly encounter. I expect that during this first year – and subsequent ones - we will identify aspects of the plan that need to be changed. This may be because the language does not accurately reflect our intent, or because we need to shift our approach. These regular reviews, envisioned by the council in the Performance and Accountability Act, will ensure that the Countywide Strategic Plan is a dynamic document, able to adjust to new contexts and challenges. I am requesting that this approach be formalized as part of the ordinance adopting the plan.

Our shared commitment to using this plan in an ongoing and meaningful way will allow us to recognize our interdependencies and work together, while still preserving our separate duties and responsibilities. What's more, it will allow us to demonstrate to the public that we are accountable, transparent, and committed to meaningful improvement.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many people who have contributed to this plan. Throughout the development of the plan, staff from the Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management (OSPPM) worked collaboratively with the Performance Management Work Group. This group, convened by the King County Council Auditor, includes representatives from all branches, agencies and departments of King County government. My thanks to my fellow elected leaders of King County government, particularly to the King County Council and Council staff who have supported this process from inception to completion. Most of all, I thank the hundreds of community members and King County employees who shared their priorities and concerns for King County as a region and as a government.

The Honorable Bob Ferguson

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As a reflection of our shared commitment to its success, Executive staff stand ready to work with the Council in its public hearing process for the plan. Please contact Elissa Benson, Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management, at (206) 263-9682 regarding any questions regarding the proposed plan, associated legislation, and how we may be of assistance in the Council's public process.

I look forward to our continued work together as we implement this plan and continue to develop a culture of performance within King County government.

Sincerely,

Dow Constantine
King County Executive

Enclosures

cc: King County Councilmembers

ATTN: Tom Bristow, Chief of Staff

Anne Noris, Clerk of the Council

The Honorable Bruce Hilyer, Presiding Judge, King County Superior Court

The Honorable Barbara Linde, Presiding Judge, King County District Court

The Honorable Sue Rahr, Sheriff, King County sheriff's Office

The Honorable Dan Satterberg, King County Prosecuting Attorney, Prosecuting
Attorney's Office

The Honorable Sherill Huff, Director, King County Elections

The Honorable Lloyd Hara, King County Assessor

Fred Jarrett, Deputy County Executive, King County Executive Office (KCEO)

Rhonda Berry, Assistant Deputy County Executive, KCEO

Dwight Dively, Director, Office of Management and Budget, KCEO

Department Directors

Frank Abe, Director of Communications, KCEO

Carrie S. Cihak, Director of Strategic Initiatives, KCEO

Patti Cole-Tindall, Labor Relations Manager, KCEO

Lorrie McKay, Customer Service Director, KCEO

Sung Yang, Government Relations Director, KCEO

Elissa Benson, Deputy Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Performance
Management, KCEO